



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 617
RELATING TO NURSING

House Committee on Higher Education
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 5, 2025

2:00PM

Room 309

Dear Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 617 which appropriates funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College.

OHA is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.¹ Among its statutory duties, OHA is required to (1) serve as principal public agency in the State of Hawai'i responsible for the performance, development and coordination of programs and activities relating to native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; (2) assess the policies and practices of other agencies impacting native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; and (3) conduct advocacy efforts for native Hawaiians and Hawaiians.²

In fulfillment of its mandates, OHA seeks to advance policies, programs and practices like SB 119 that strengthen Hawaiian well-being, including physical, spiritual, mental and emotional health. SB 119 will increase access to care for Hawaiians by expanding the capacity of university nursing programs to help reduce nursing workforce shortages. Native Hawaiians face persistent disparities in health and health care, due to barriers including geographic isolation, limited access to linguistically accessible and culturally competent care, and social and economic inequities. Within the next 5 years, 22% of RNs expect to leave the Hawai'i nursing workforce³, and there exists a misdistribution of nurses practicing in Honolulu County which forces residents to commute from rural areas or the neighbor islands to obtain care.⁴ This combination of factors

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XII § 5

² Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 10-3.

³ "Hawai'i State Center for Nursing's 2023 Workforce Supply: Statewide Report," at p. 29, <https://www.hawaiiicenterfornursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2023HawaiiNursingWorkforceSupply.vFinal.pdf>

⁴ "Hawai'i State Center for Nursing's 2023 Workforce Supply: Statewide Report," at p. 27, <https://www.hawaiiicenterfornursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2023HawaiiNursingWorkforceSupply.vFinal.pdf>

threatens to exacerbate the challenges Native Hawaiians experience when attempting to access healthcare.

A Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at the University of Hawaii Maui College would play a pivotal role in addressing rural healthcare disparities for Native Hawaiians by providing culturally competent, community-centered care. The program would equip students with the skills, knowledge, and clinical experience necessary to meet the unique healthcare needs of rural populations, particularly in remote Hawaiian communities. By fostering local talent and promoting a strong presence of Native Hawaiian nurses, the program helps reduce healthcare access barriers, empowers individuals to become healthcare leaders in their own communities, and strengthens the overall healthcare infrastructure in rural areas, ultimately improving health outcomes for Native Hawaiians.

For these reasons, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS HB 617**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
and
House Committee on Education**

HEARING: Wednesday February 5, 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room 309 State Capital and via videoconference



Hawai'i – American Nurses Association (Hawai'i-ANA)

HB617 – Relating to Nursing

Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair Terez Amato, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education, and Chair Justin Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and members of the House Committee on Education, thank you for providing this opportunity for Hawai'i nurses' voices to be heard.

Hawai'i-American Nurses Association (Hawai'i- ANA) is the professional association for over 17,000 registered nurses who live and work in Hawai'i. Our mission is to advocate for the improvement of the healthcare system in the communities where we live and work. **We stand in strong support of this bill** appropriating funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College (UHMC).

Currently, UHMC educates registered nurses (RNs) for an associates degree in nursing, whereas the preference of facilities in Hawai'i, including Maui, seeking to hire RNs is for those prepared with a bachelor's degree. We need well-prepared nurses who understand

and know the culture of Hawai‘i, who do not need to leave their home island to achieve their dreams of a job and further education. We strongly support and promote education programs such as the BSN being offered on Maui to increase the number of graduating nurses in our state with a bachelor’s degree.

Hawai‘i-ANA respectfully asks the committee to pass HB 617 through your committee. We thank your committee for its commitment to the people of Hawai‘i, in ensuring that we educate and retain local nurses throughout the state to care for all of us. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Contact information for Hawai‘i – American Nurses Association:

President: Dr. Denise Cohen, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, president@hawaii-ana.org

Executive Director: Elizabeth M. Kahakua, BSN executivedirector@hawaii-ana.org
phone (808) 779-3001 500 Lunalilo Home Road, #27-E, Honolulu HI 96825



**Testimony to the House Committee on Education
Wednesday, February 5, 2025; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 0617, RELATING TO NURSING.

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 0617, RELATING TO NURSING..

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This measure, as received by your Committee, would:

- (1) Appropriate \$100,000 in general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, and \$60,000 for fiscal year 2026-2027 to meet the increased demand for prerequisite courses by students newly enrolled in the bachelor science in nursing degree program at the University of Hawaii Maui College;
- (2) Appropriate \$90,000 in general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, and \$60,000 for fiscal year 2026-2027 for supplies, equipment, and simulation and laboratory upgrades associated with establishment of the bachelor of science in nursing degree program at the University of Hawaii Maui College; and
- (3) Appropriate \$250,000 in general funds for 2026-2027 for instructional costs associated with providing a third year of nursing courses following the establishment of the bachelor of science in nursing degree program at the University of Hawaii Maui College.

This measure would take effect on July 1, 2025.

The State of Hawaii is experiencing a severe shortage of health care professionals in the workforce, especially in rural areas. Recent studies note that the current shortage of physicians is at 20% of the total full-time equivalent positions throughout the State. The shortage is especially severe in the fields of primary care, infectious diseases, colorectal surgery, pathology, general surgery, pulmonology, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, family medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, rheumatology, cardiology, hematology/oncology, and pediatric subspecialties of endocrinology, cardiology, neurology, hematology/oncology, and gastroenterology.

The same can be said for registered and practical nurses, community health workers, social workers, pharmacists, and other disciplines in the field of health care.

The HPCA believes that the establishment of a bachelor of science degree in nursing at the University of Hawaii Maui College would greatly expand the learning opportunities of future nurses situated on the neighbor islands. This is critical because the shortage of nursing in Hawaii is dire.

Accordingly, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



February 5, 2025 at 2:00 pm
Conference Room 309

House Committee on Higher Education

To: Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett
Vice Chair Terez Amato

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
AVP, Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: Support
HB 617, Relating to Nursing

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of this measure, which appropriates funds for the establishment of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at the University of Hawaii Maui College. Addressing Hawaii's critical nursing workforce shortage is an urgent priority, and this measure takes an essential step toward increasing the pipeline of qualified nurses, particularly for the county of Maui.

According to our most recent healthcare workforce demand survey, Hawaii currently faces a deficit of just over 900 registered nurses. Expanding access to nursing education is an important piece of addressing this shortage, especially in neighbor island communities. Establishing a BSN program at UH Maui College will help to ensure that more individuals interested in nursing as a profession can live and study where they live, without having to relocate to Oahu or even the mainland. This can help to ensure a more stable and well-trained nursing workforce across the state, but especially on Maui.

This program will also serve as an important piece of an initiative that the Association is currently engaged in with UH Maui College to help certified nurse aides (CNAs) to become licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and, eventually, registered nurses (RNs). This type of glidepath program is essential to retaining our nursing workforce, especially in post-acute care settings.

We appreciate the legislature's continued interest in investing in nursing education and the health and well-being of our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration of this measure.



**Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
and
House Committee on Education
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 and videoconference
By
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 617

Chairs Garrett and Woodson, Vice Chairs Amato and La Chica, and members of the committees:

Thank you for hearing this measure. This measure appropriates funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing conducts research on the nursing workforce at the time of nursing license renewal. The survey questions include inquiry into demographics, licensure, certifications, positions, hours worked, educational history, and more. In 2023¹, survey responses from nurses in Maui indicate the following:

Local nursing education programs are vital to the sustainability of Maui's RN workforce (statewide report):

- The statewide RN workforce was 16,390 of which 10% are on Maui.
- 54% of RNs working on Maui were educated in the state.

There is demand for BSN education on Maui:

- Statewide, 76% of RNs hold a BSN or graduate degree in nursing (data tables) vs. 59% in Maui County (statewide report).
- RNs in Maui County are proportionally slightly more likely than RNs statewide to be enrolled in a degree-leading nurse education program (Statewide=6% (data tables); Maui=8% (statewide report)).
- Among RNs in Maui County who are enrolled in a degree-leading program, 45% are enrolled in a BSN program. 80% of all Maui County RNs enrolled in a nursing degree program are enrolled in an out-of-state school (unpublished data from the 2023 Hawai'i Nursing Workforce Supply Survey)

The creation of a BSN program in Maui County would respond to existing demand for BSN education in the county and create an opportunity for students in the county to be educated locally.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing commends the legislature for addressing the opportunities for nurses to advance their education in-state.

¹ Hawai'i State Center for Nursing (2024). 2023 Hawai'i Nursing Workforce Supply: Statewide Report.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 617 – RELATING TO NURSING

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of HB 617 which appropriates funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at the University of Hawai'i - Maui College.

The UH recognizes the existing workforce shortages in health care and the high demand for nurses in the state. Additionally, the [UH Regents Policy 4.207](#) Community College System acknowledges the need for the neighbor island community colleges to continue to provide a comprehensive set of courses and programs to make the university accessible to every Hawai'i resident who wants and can benefit from the opportunities and experiences provided by the community colleges. The UH is also cognizant of the importance of using our budget resources wisely and being careful not to duplicate existing programs.

HB 617 indicates “[t]he legislature believes that offering a bachelor of science in nursing program at the university of Hawaii Maui college can help to increase the supply of nurse graduates, reduce the nursing workforce shortage, and allow Maui nursing students to remain on Maui during their entire course of study.” The UH concurs with the legislature that the lack of a BSN program in the county of Maui is a matter of statewide concern and will begin an assessment to ensure there is no duplication of programs and an effective use of resources while initiating the new academic program proposal process for the BSN. The funding from HB 617 would support students taking the new BSN prerequisites in preparation for the program curriculum and provide for additional faculty lecturers.

While UH supports the intent of HB 617, we respectfully suggest that should an appropriation be provided, it be included within the general appropriations act. We believe this approach, rather than through a special appropriation, would integrate the necessary funding into the base budget, ensuring greater fiscal stability and predictability for the program's long-term implementation and sustainability. Integrating the funding in this manner would also facilitate better long-range planning and resource allocation.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 617, on the condition its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 617.

TESTIMONY OF DR. ALLAN WEILAND

HB 617 AND SB 119

Good morning. I am Dr. Allan Weiland, a retired Medical Administrator for Kaiser Permanente and Assistant Governor for Rotary on Maui. I am testifying in favor of creating a 4-year Bachelor's of Nursing degree program at UH Maui College.

Maui has a substantial shortage of nurses and other health personnel. The only nursing training program on our island currently is at UH Maui College. They offer both a Certificate and an Associate's Degree program for nurses, but not a 4-year Bachelor's degree. The students in the program are mostly older, with a family. They are less mobile than younger students, and often are sole family support. There are lots of job opportunities, and so after graduation, these students are able to get work here. Very few go on to get a more advanced degree at a school off-island that would open the door to a large array of nursing careers.

After the fires of August 8, 2023, Maui has a shortage of housing. It is difficult to bring in trained nursing staff to fill the gaps in care that exist. It would be more effective to train our own on Maui, by allowing UH Maui College to offer the advanced nursing degrees.

The need exists; there are jobs available; many students would take advantage of a local advanced degree program if it existed here.

Thank you for your time.

Allan Weiland, MD

Rotary Assistant Governor for
Maui Coastal Clubs

Kailana Cockett
Wailuku, HI 967393
kailanac@hawaii.edu



24th January 2025

Troy Hashimoto

Hawaii State Senator, District 5
Hawaii State Capitol Room 222
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha e Senator Hashimoto a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike,

I strongly support the proposed bill to establish a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at the University of Hawaii Maui College (UHMC). As a Native Hawaiian and single parent, I understand the profound impact this initiative could have on our community.

Currently, I am enrolled in an out-of-state BSN program, which I am forced to pay out of pocket due to the lack of financial aid coverage and scholarship. This situation places a significant financial burden on me and many other similar circumstances. Establishing a BSN program at UHMC would alleviate this burden and provide much-needed support to local students.

The flexibility of an online program would empower Maui residents like myself to work and attend school on the very island we call home. Online flexibility would be incredibly beneficial for parents like myself who cannot afford another year off work to attend school. I wholeheartedly support this initiative and recognize the tremendous benefits it will bring to our Maui community.

Me ka mahalo nui,

Kailana Cockett

UHMC Nursing Student, Cohort-18

Written Testimony Presented Before the

House of Representatives

Committee on Higher Education

And

Committee on Education

HEARING: Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 309

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

HB617 – RELATING TO NURSING

Chair Garret, Vice Chair Amato, members of the House Committee on Higher Education, and Chair Woodlson, Vice Chair La Chica, members of the Committee on Education, thank you for the opportunity to testify **in strong support of HB 617**, appropriating funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program at the University of Hawai'i Maui College (UHMC).

As background I am an alumnus of Maui Community College (MCC) and graduated with an LPN in 1981. Since then I have obtained my Associate in Nursing in 1983, my Bachelor's in Nursing in 1991, my Master's in Nursing in 1999. and finally my PhD in Nursing in 2013. I started teaching at MCC in January 1992 and retired from UHMC in December 2020. Since I started nursing school in 1980 I have seen all healthcare professions raise their educational basic requirements with the exception of nursing, because the complexity of healthcare increases.

This is despite the fact that Magnet hospitals such as Queens Medical Center must have at least 80% of their workforce be bachelor's prepared nurses. Currently at UHMC in order to obtain an associate in nursing students must complete 4.5 semesters while with only 1.5 more they would obtain a bachelor's degree. This isn't fair to the student nor to the faculty. As one faculty member noted years ago, we are trying to shove 4 years of education into two and expect our students to take the exact same national licensure exams. Make no mistake, I am proud to be an alumnus of MCC/UHMC, but we need to do better for our students and keep up with the times. Our students are at a disadvantage when they must compete for jobs with Bachelor-prepared nurses from other islands or the mainland. We need well prepared nurses from the Maui community who understand and understand the culture of Hawai'i. We need well-prepared nurses who do not need to leave home to achieve their dreams.

I strongly support and promote education programs such as the BSN being offered on Maui to increase the number of graduating nurses in our state to attract and retain local applicants for our nursing positions caring for our community.

I respectfully ask the committee to pass HB 617 through your committee. I thank your committee for its commitment to the people of Hawai'i, in ensuring that we educate and retain high quality nurses throughout the state.

Denise Cohen, PhD, APRN, RN, FNP-BC
Email: denisecohen@mac.com
Cell: 808-283-5414

HB-617

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:40:54 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Desiree Constance De La Espriella	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Desiree De La Espriella, and I am writing to express my strong support for the appropriation of funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at the University of Hawai‘i Maui College. As a current student and future nursing professional, I can attest to the growing need for more advanced nursing education in our community, and the UHMC BSN program would directly address this need.

Maui, and the surrounding islands, are facing significant healthcare challenges, particularly in rural areas where there is a shortage of skilled nurses. The creation of a BSN program would not only help bridge this gap but also enhance the quality of care provided to our residents. Currently, many students must leave the island to pursue higher-level nursing education, which can be both financially and emotionally burdensome. By establishing a BSN program here at UHMC, we can retain local talent and produce highly skilled nurses who are deeply connected to the community they serve.

Furthermore, the healthcare industry increasingly demands nurses with a BSN due to the advanced clinical skills and leadership abilities that the degree imparts. By offering this program at UHMC, we would be equipping local nursing students with the knowledge and tools necessary to excel in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, ensuring that they are ready to take on leadership roles in the future.

The UHMC BSN program would also benefit the broader economy by providing more opportunities for local employment, reducing the reliance on mainland-trained nurses, and strengthening Maui's healthcare infrastructure. This program would align with the state's commitment to addressing healthcare disparities, especially in underserved communities, and would be a key investment in the health and well-being of our entire population.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support the appropriation of funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at UHMC. This program will not only provide much-needed educational opportunities for our students but will also help build a more sustainable and resilient healthcare workforce for Hawai‘i's future.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Desiree De La Espriella
954-397-9355
UHMC Nursing Student

Kanani Barcai
Wailuku, HI 96793
kpbarcai@hawaii.edu



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII®
MAUI COLLEGE

25th January 2025

Troy Hashimoto

Hawaii State Senator, District 5
Hawaii State Capitol Room 222
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha e Senator Hashimoto a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike,

I fully support the bill for establishing a BSN program at the University of Hawaii Maui College. This initiative is long overdue. As a Native Hawaiian woman in my final semester of the ADN program at the college, I am acutely aware of the challenges faced when there is no option to pursue a BSN degree on my home campus.

The death of my father during a hospital stay when I was young profoundly influenced my decision to pursue a nursing degree. Despite facing numerous life challenges that caused me to return to school repeatedly, I never gave up. It took me many years to achieve my nursing degree due to financial constraints and being a single mother. With the help of financial aid and scholarships, I am finally fulfilling my dream. I am now married, but we still struggle to afford living here due to the rising costs of housing and living expenses. Pursuing my BSN would likely require moving off the island or paying for an online degree from a mainland institution, which is not financially feasible for us.

If approved, this bill will provide invaluable opportunities for Native Hawaiian students and the local community to earn their BSN degrees while remaining on the island. This opportunity will enable us to give back to our community and support its health needs.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Kanani Barcai

UHMC Nursing Student, Cohort-18

HB-617

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:38:54 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Esperanza Turrieta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

What: Written Testimony Presented Before the House Committee on Higher Education for Nursing in Maui County

Where: Feb 5, 2025, 2:00 PM

From: Esperanza Turrieta

RE: HB 617 RELATING TO NURSING EDUCATION

As a soon-to-be graduate of the UH Maui College Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program, I have experienced firsthand the exceptional quality of education and support provided by UHMC. Introducing a BSN program would offer a seamless transition for students like myself, allowing us to continue our education and professional development within the same supportive environment.

Moreover, I hope this program will include an online option similar to the RN to BSN programs offered by other schools in the state. This flexibility would be incredibly beneficial for ADN students who are eager to advance their education while balancing work and personal commitments. The ability to pursue a BSN online would enable us to remain active contributors to our local healthcare system, ensuring that we can continue to serve our Maui community with the highest level of care.

This initiative is a significant step forward for our educational community and a vital investment in the health and well-being of our Maui residents. I wholeheartedly support this bill and believe that it will have a profound and positive impact on both the students and the broader Maui community.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Esperanza Turrieta

UHMC Nursing Student, Cohort-18

**Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 2 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference**

**By
Anne Scharnhorst, DNP, RN, CNE
UH Maui College Professor of Nursing**

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT with Amendments on H.B. 617

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee:

Thank you for hearing this measure. This measure aims to appropriate moneys for the establishment of a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) at UH Maui College. This measure speaks directly to providing Maui County with the right number of nurses prepared at the state of the art level. Being the only nursing program in the county it is imperative that we know the standards required for entering practice, and provide them to our county.

Understanding this a state priority, the Hawaii Statewide Nursing Consortium was founded in 2012 to address the national call to have 80% or RNs practicing with a BSN or higher. UH Manoa, UHMC, Kapiolani CC, and Kauai CC designed a curriculum we all use SO THAT the CC students could go seamless on to earn their BSN from Manoa SOH. The result 12 years later is that less than 20% of UHMC nursing graduates used this pathway. Another 20%, go out of state to online universities to earn this credential. In sum, the current percent of practicing nurses at Maui Memorial Medical Centers with BSN or higher is just over 50%.

This measure would provide 100% BSN graduates to our community going forward and we would be successful in meeting the call to provide bachelors preparation for prelicensure nurses. The Chief Nursing Executive from the hospital has requested this degree for the past 5 years at our Nursing Advisory Committee meetings.

As you know, our college has been instrumental in providing LPN education statewide, demonstrating our ability to conceive and launch essential curriculum, and this initiative will meet a longstanding need to Maui County.

I thank the legislature for addressing this topic and entertaining solutions that will improve the health of our residents by making UH Maui College's initial nursing preparation more robust and aligned with national standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify with comments on this measure.

02/03/2025

**TESTIMONY SUPPORTING HB 617
RELATING TO NURSING**

**TESTIMONY TO:
REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW TAKUYA GARRETT, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE TEREZ AMATO, VICE CHAIR
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE HIGHER EDUCATION**

**BY:
[Erica Delacruz](#)
Registered Nursing Student, University of Hawaii Maui College**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 617, Relating to Nursing. This bill proposes an appropriation of funds to support the development of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program within the University of Hawai'i - Maui College. This bill would enable nursing students to pursue a baccalaureate degree in nursing without having to leave the island.

...

My name is Erica C. Delacruz and I will be graduating from the associate degree registered nursing program at University of Hawaii Maui College this May. I am writing to you in support of instituting a bachelor's of science nursing degree at UHMC not only as a student, but also as a mother who birthed and is currently raising children on Maui. I have been a resident of Maui County, serving the community in healthcare since 2013. I plan to continue my education by pursuing a bachelor's in nursing. As such, I will be staying on Maui working fulltime and will be forced to utilize an off-island online RN to BSN program. Instead of competing with others to get into an off-island or even out of state program, creating a bachelor program on Maui will facilitate nurse retention, keep families together, and create affordable education options so locals can "keep it local" by continuing to give back to our beautiful community.

...

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 617, relating to Nursing.

HB-617

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:28:10 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Representative Garrett and Vice Chair Representative Amato, and Members of the House Committee Higher Education:

I am testifying in **strong support of HB617, Relating to Nursing**. Evidence shows that bachelor's-prepared nurses are safer nurses, with fewer medical errors, fewer deaths, and better patient outcomes. I teach in the ADN program at UHMC and upon polling my current ADN students, 100% of both our first and second-year students aspire to earn a BSN degree. Our local hospital (MMMC, part of MHS) just ratified a contract to pay a wage differential of \$2 per hour extra for bachelor's prepared nurses. Our students are stretched thin, with jobs and families to support in addition to school, and we would like to reduce barriers for our Maui residents to pursue a career in nursing at the highest levels they can. Offering a BSN at UHMC on their home island will create a more efficient path for them, increase their earning potential, and increase the quality of care provided for our Maui Nui community. Furthermore, the BSN covers additional topics that are critical for responding to our community's complex modern health needs, including community, public, and global health, and advanced mental health. Thank you for consideration of funding this important initiative for our county by **SUPPORTing HB 617, Relating to Nursing**.

Kathleen Hagan, Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Educator

Paia, Hawaii

LATE

HB-617

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:48:41 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kate Thompson	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear House HED Chair, Vice Chair and committee members:

The Maui College AS in Nursing graduates already have a fully on-line option to complete their BSN education through UH-Manoa and/or UH-Hilo.

It seems that since Nursing Faculty recruitment and retention is already a challenge, it seems odd to increase the demand for more faculty to create a new program, that will have to be accredited.

What is the benefit for Maui College, or for the Maui nursing students? Would the school receive more federal funding? Is having a BSN program a status symbol or source of pride, for Maui College?

It seems the Hawai'i State Nursing Consortium is already meeting the State's need for an RN to BSN completion program with its fully on-line and convenient programs for students.

Mahalo for considering these questions.

Kate Thompson R.N., M.S.N. (Semi-retired)